





1st ed. 100  
2nd ed. 500 copies  
Watters 685  
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FIRST EDITION



THE DISTRICT of Windermere lies to the eastern side of the Province of British Columbia near to the south east corner. Two magnificent ranges of the Canadian Pacific Rocky Mountains hedge in on the east side the part with which this legend specially deals and the part which really gave the name of Windermere to the district as a whole. The farthest east is called the Mitchell Range, while the one visible from Invermere, where the legend first saw the light is known as the Stanford Range. Between the two, only to emerge at Canal Flats, run the waters of the great Columbia River, which comprise Lakes Windermere, Columbia and Mud adjoining the Flat to the north and extend for a total distance of possibly fifty miles. Mount Swansea, or "the tomb of the boy" is near to the northern end of Lake Windermere. There are evidences on it of Indian ceremonies

and more modern remains of mining for copper. From Lake Windermere the Columbia River flows north and it is a peculiar natural phenomon that for several miles from where it leaves the lake this river is never frozen over. The famous Sinclair Hot Springs are to be found in a pass in the mountains a few miles north of Invermere and are wonderful in their health restoring qualities.

When the ice first forms over the lakes in the Fall and the cold weather gradually steals over the land as night comes on, it is a "creepy," mysterious feeling that visits one nearby listening to the "cries, the moans, the sobs of grief" which seem to come from the depth of the waters below being bound down by "the pall" of ice.

If one stands in the early twilight at a point near to the north east corner of the Dominion Government Experimental station and looks to the north east it requires but a little stretch of imagination and due allowance for lapse of centuries to see the

recumbent figure of a woman, with tangled tresses (flowing to the north) as she sleeps on in the sleep which knows no waking. At least that is the way in which all these things present themselves to the writer. —B.G.H.  
Invermere, B.C., Dec. 1920.

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## THE LEGEND OF WINDERMERE

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It has been said by learned men that in the dim and distant ages of the past, when the dionceras ranged over the lands and the dinosauria flew above them; at the time when all animals upon the earth were huge according to our present ideas, that the Columbia and Kootenay rivers formed part of one inland sea or water course, instead as is now their way, one flowing north to turn south and the other flowing south to turn north, that in those days the present valleys of these two modern rivers were one and the same.

The giants who roamed over the



great central plains, in the use of their magic arts threw up huge mounds in long tiers, as of banks or dams to hold the main waters back and to give them more dry land on which to hunt these animals and the huge mammoths. Back to the west of the dams moved the great waters of the sea to form what is now the Pacific Ocean. The rough unfinished dams are now our ranges of mountains, rough, rugged and rocky, tossed up from the depths by giant force, without form or comeliness. Up through the weaker crusts of the valleys between oozed the waters from below, forced to the surface by the pressure of the huge dams above. These waters trickled out in even larger quantities, filling the valleys until by constant wriggling they wormed their way past and through obstacles and at last forced passages to the ocean.

Huge trees grew upon the lands of the plains which grew smaller as the animals came down in size till at last

they became what we see now and the trunks and branches of the huge trees of old changed by pressure into stone, became black with the passing of years until they turned into our present popular fuel in the form of coal.

On the wide and fertile plains men of gigantic stature lived and loved, ate, fought and died, just as do their pigmy successors of the present day. The gods dwelt amongst them and were good to them, only using their magic power to punish evil. Winder—or he of the wind—was swift to run, a mighty hunter and able in his work. Beloved was he by all his brethren and favored by the gods.

Mere—or she of the sea—a child of Nature, was beautiful to look upon and lithe of limb. She too was a favorite of the gods and beloved by all. Nature bound them with the cords of love and the gods favored a union. Many and happy were the days these two spent together coursing over the wide plains and drink-

ing to the full the free air of the glorious expanse of the wide open prairies. Joy unbounded could not forever be theirs. Sorrow was to enter their lives, for with the birth of their first child the sin of the world blighted them. Death came to the boy in early life and Mere, stricken with grief, soon followed her son. Borne aloft by the gods mother and son were taken to the far west, to the land of the Sinking Sun. The most beautiful place that could be found was not thought to be too good for the dead. Gently, softly the gods carried them, followed in their course by Winder. On they came until the first dam or barrier was past, the first stream like a thread of silver was passed over and the top of the second barrier—part of the dam—was reached and here the gods found the prettiest of the pretty part of this rough country and there, just as Nature had left her, they laid Mere down upon the top of the barrier with her face turned to the sky and



her long tresses stretched out towards the north. Here they laid her and departed.

Back they went to the wide plains carrying their sad hearts and deep grief with them. In time Mere only was uppermost in the mind of Winder. He ever and anon as time went by used to return to mourn. In the lovely valley he would stay watching away on past the close of day. Here he would watch even as the soft blue shades from the last rays of the setting sun came out of the west and twilight deepened into starlit night, sit and watch her recumbent form against the skyline which, even now, worn and rounded as it is by ages, may still be seen at dusk brought out against the darker sky of the east.

Favored by the gods some of her virtues are yet with us. Dying as she did in all the full vigor, strength and purity of an outdoor life her power for good remained even after death for from her funeral couch there

hourly and daily streams her life giving qualities which appear to us in the hot springs—not far away—a boon and a blessing to all mankind.

Quite in the neighborhood, resting not far from his mother's feet, the gods buried the baby boy. They made him precious by covering him heavily with great quantities of ore rich with copper—copper so good and so important to the aboriginies for the making of arrow heads and weapons of the chase. Heap upon heap they placed upon him on the top of the barrier dam until it rose as a funeral dome above the nearby water but low enough to be hidden by mountains behind. Like a thumb they built out a part over-looking the water, its sides dropping steeply to the land below. Here on this thumb, years and years after, Indians who had come in after the reign of gods and after the giants, knowing the legend of the sleeping boy and watching night by night the statuesque form of the mother, encouraged their boys

to ascend and celebrate their puberty fast, encouraging them to win their totem in precincts so lovely and so holy. Here may now be seen at the edge of the perilous cliff a ring in which the probationer sat and fasted until, overcome by exhaustion he fell into a trance resulting in a dream and the choosing of his totem. Even the Indian maidens, filled with the beauty of the tale and the pure mother of the mountains and desirous of obtaining her virtues, made pilgrimages to the shrine of the boy's tomb, for it was told them in an old legend, well confirmed, that the gods had said that every girl possessing the virtues of Mere, who made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the boy would within twelve moons possess a teepee of her own.

For many years Winder wandered alone over the plains, still young and strong, but ever pining for those who had passed west into the lands of the dying sun. Never did he forget the beauty of the scenery which

surrounded the spot where his dear ones lay and lonely and forlorn he yearly made a visit to mourn by their graves. Once he did not return. Long, long he was missed but when search was made for him by the gods who loved him well he was found in this beautiful valley. Prone on his left side he lay, the waters lapping him about; his head to the feet of Mere while the tomb of his son nestled closely against his neck; legs crossed, with feet one on top of the other. Thus he lay as though in a deep sleep. The gods, filled with the beauty of the scene, shocked over the discovery and fearing to disturb in his last sleep one they loved so well, simply waved their magic wands over his prostrate body repeating mystic words. Quietly as he lay the body dissolved as though sinking into the earth and in its place there came three lakes, two of them beautiful in their form and all bound together by a silver stream.

"Sleep on, oh loved one; sleep on,

but never cease to weep. Let your warm tears mingle with the waters that flow to the sea. Sleep on."

Thus they left him. His feet in time changed to clay, spread out into the waters and formed a flat separating the waters so that some commenced to flow north while those beyond the land where his feet had been commenced to flow south, even as they do now. When all was quiet and undisturbed it was found a strange change had taken place for the waters flowing north from the lake were warm, made so by Winder's tears of love and grief. Even yet his tears flow softly from the outlet of the lake on down the river which day in, day out, year in and year out, never freezes over for miles even in the coldest winters, but as a constant token of affection passes along to the farthest end of the effigy of Mere as she lies upon our mountain tops.

Ever and anon the sighing of the gods may still be heard in the wind which comes up the valley from the



south and plays over the lakes and the recumbent form and goes on its way to Elysian fields. The stately firs upon the lake's side join in the dirge and bend their heads in sympathy. Year by year at the season which marks the death of Mere, just as the days grow short the gods still come and throw a pall of ice over the lakes which mark Winder's resting place. At this season his cries, his moans, his sobs of grief may yet be heard upon the shores as much as to tell all hearers that his grief is still great and calling upon all who love beauty in nature, to come and worship at the graves of the departed, who, lovely in life, are not separated in death and who now united in spirit are joined in a union of the beautiful in the making of the name of Winder-Mere. —B.G.H.



